

## Africa under imperialist siege

# Attacks escalate on Libya, Ivory Coast, Zimbabwe

By Abayomi Azikiwe  
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

U.S., U.N. and NATO military forces have intensified the implementation of policies aimed at total economic domination and regime change for states that resist interference in their internal affairs. As Africa becomes more of a major source for exploiting oil, strategic minerals and agricultural commodities, the continent will be under increasing pressure from Western capitalist countries.

Military attacks against African states are accelerating at a time when the capitalist governments in Western Europe and North America continue to assert that the recovery from the global recession is well underway. Nonetheless, a recent International Monetary Fund forecast indicates that the imperialist states are still very concerned about the future stability of the world markets.

An IMF World Economic Outlook reports, "Among the challenges are rising oil prices, unrest in the Middle East, continued inflation in China and debt problems in Europe. The recovery has solidified, but the unemployment remains high." (BBC News, April 11)

The IMF cites fears related to the cutoff of oil supplies, unrest in North Africa and the Middle East, and the gloomy economic picture facing Portugal, Greece, Spain and the Irish Republic. The African countries that have been targeted for destabilization and regime change are large-scale producers of oil and other valuable resources and commodities.

### Libya & African Union peace plan

Since March 19, the U.S. and other imperialist states under the ostensible control of NATO have carried out a bombing campaign against the North African state of Libya. These airstrikes and cruise missile attacks have pounded the capital of Tripoli and other Libyan cities.

On April 10, the African Union sent several heads of state, a foreign minister and the commission chair to begin a mediation process to end the conflict in Libya. The AU delegation consisted of President Jacob Zuma of South Africa, Denis Sassou-Nguesso of Congo-Brazzaville, Jean Ping of the AU,

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## Thousands protest U.S. wars abroad and at home



April 9, NYC.

WW PHOTO: SHARON BLACK



April 10, San Francisco. Read more on page 7.

PHOTO: PATRICIA JACKSON

By John Catalinotto  
New York

Thousands of people from virtually all sectors of U.S. workers, the oppressed and youths gathered in Union Square in New York City April 9 and marched, shouted and drummed their anti-war slogans for two miles to Foley Square in downtown Manhattan. As this largest anti-war march in New York in years stretched for 20 blocks down Broadway, it passed by thousands of New Yorkers busy shopping, who smiled, cheered and waved at what can only be described as the new face of a vibrant movement to confront the war-makers.

The United National Anti-war Coalition called for this demonstration last August. What made it new was the thoroughly multinational character not only of the speakers but of the participants. Thousands of Muslims, many immigrants from South and Western Asia, strengthened the march. Palestinians, faced with the latest attack on their people in Gaza from the U.S.-backed Israeli military, brought urgency and a fighting spirit to the demonstration.

A large contingent of Mexicans and other Latino/a people joined and cheered the many speakers who called on the crowd to return

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# Bosses target ILWU Local 10

# Rank-and-file workers stand with Wisconsin struggle

By Cheryl LaBash

Clarence Thomas, member of International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10, called out to the crowd from the podium at the San Francisco anti-war march on April 10, “Everyone within earshot of my voice should understand this. ILWU Local 10 needs your support. We cannot be intimidated and silenced.”

Thomas was calling on everyone there to defend his union local against a vicious attack by the Pacific Maritime Association following a dockworkers’ job action on April 4.

On that day, labor and civil rights movements coordinated national actions to defend collective bargaining and workers’ rights. The events honored the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. who was assassinated on that date 43 years ago while supporting bargaining rights for sanitation workers in Memphis, Tenn.

In answer to the AFL-CIO’s call for “no business as usual,” ILWU Local 10 members engaged in rank-and-file resistance to the anti-worker offensive symbolized by events in Wisconsin. They stayed home from work on April 4. For 24 hours, no shipping moved through the ports of San Francisco and Oakland, Calif.

The PMA hit back with a cease-and-desist arbitration award, and is now suing the union in federal court. According to Thomas, the PMA has desecrated the memory of Dr. King, and is now attempting to squelch the most basic right and self-expression of any worker in a capitalist economy — the right to withhold labor power.

However, the San Francisco Labor Council quickly called for “a mass mobilization of all Bay Area Labor Councils and the California AFL-CIO to rally in front of PMA headquarters in San Francisco on Monday, April 25, to demand that the court suit be dropped and that the vindictive lynch-mob procedures against the union in the arbitration be halted immediately.”

On April 4 this writer interviewed Thomas, a former ILWU Local 10 secretary-treasurer and current executive board member, about the historical and special relationship of his local with Dr. King.



PHOTO: DELORES THOMAS

### Interview with Clarence Thomas

**WW:** Why were Local 10 members moved to take this rank-and-file resistance?

**CT:** What a lot of young trade unionists don’t know is that Dr. King was in Memphis to support sanitation workers; 90 percent were African American. They had no union, no effective way to address griev-

ances. They were making rock-bottom salaries, and the workers were arbitrarily sent home, losing pay. Their equipment was antiquated and poorly maintained. In 1968 two sanitation workers were killed, swallowed up by packers. There was no workers’ compensation. Each family got a month’s pay and \$500 toward burial costs.

It is ironic that we are facing the same conditions as public sector and private sector workers today.

On Sept. 21, 1967, Dr. King was made an honorary member of ILWU Local 10 in San Francisco. He was in the Bay Area to launch a seven-city concert headlined by Harry Belafonte and Joan Baez to raise funds for the Southern Christian Leadership Council. Dr. King spoke at our union meeting, and that connection with Dr. King is very significant for our local.

ILWU Local 10 has responded to the attacks on collective bargaining and on public workers in the state of Wisconsin by volunteering not to go to work today. Ours is the most militant rank-and-file, bottom-up union in the country. Local 10 is the social conscience of the ILWU.

We have a responsibility to step forward and take action to have a strong union and continue the tradition of Harry Bridges and other founders of the ILWU who believed the union has a commitment to the fight for social justice and the survival of the working class. Or should I say the emancipation of the working class.

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**National Office**  
55 W. 17 St.  
New York, NY 10011  
212-627-2994  
[wwp@workers.org](mailto:wwp@workers.org)

**Atlanta**  
P.O. Box 5565  
Atlanta, GA 30307  
404-627-0185  
[atlanta@workers.org](mailto:atlanta@workers.org)

**Baltimore**  
c/o Solidarity Center  
2011 N. Charles St., Bsm.  
Baltimore, MD 21218  
443-909-8964  
[baltimore@workers.org](mailto:baltimore@workers.org)

**Boston**  
284 Amory St.  
Boston, MA 02130  
617-522-6626  
Fax 617-983-3836  
[boston@workers.org](mailto:boston@workers.org)

**Buffalo, N.Y.**  
367 Delaware Ave.  
Buffalo, NY 14202  
716-883-2534  
[buffalo@workers.org](mailto:buffalo@workers.org)

**Chicago**  
27 N. Wacker Dr. #138  
Chicago, IL 60606  
773-381-5839  
[chicago@workers.org](mailto:chicago@workers.org)

**Cleveland**  
P.O. Box 5963  
Cleveland, OH 44101  
216-738-0320  
[cleveland@workers.org](mailto:cleveland@workers.org)

**Denver**  
[denver@workers.org](mailto:denver@workers.org)

**Detroit**  
5920 Second Ave.  
Detroit, MI 48202  
313-459-0777  
[detroit@workers.org](mailto:detroit@workers.org)

**Durham, N.C.**  
331 W. Main St., Ste. 408  
Durham, NC 27701  
[durham@workers.org](mailto:durham@workers.org)

**Houston**  
P.O. Box 3454  
Houston, TX 77253-3454  
713-503-2633  
[houston@workers.org](mailto:houston@workers.org)

**Los Angeles**  
5274 W Pico Blvd.  
Suite # 207  
Los Angeles, CA 90019  
[la@workers.org](mailto:la@workers.org)  
323-515-5870

**Milwaukee**  
[milwaukee@workers.org](mailto:milwaukee@workers.org)

**Philadelphia**  
P.O. Box 34249  
Philadelphia, PA 19101  
610-931-2615  
[phila@workers.org](mailto:phila@workers.org)

**Pittsburgh**  
[pittsburgh@workers.org](mailto:pittsburgh@workers.org)  
Rochester, N.Y.  
585-436-6458  
[rochester@workers.org](mailto:rochester@workers.org)

**San Diego, Calif.**  
P.O. Box 33447  
San Diego, CA 92163  
619-692-0355  
[sandiego@workers.org](mailto:sandiego@workers.org)

**San Francisco**  
2940 16th St., #207  
San Francisco CA 94103  
415-738-4739  
[sf@workers.org](mailto:sf@workers.org)

**Tucson, Ariz.**  
[tucson@workers.org](mailto:tucson@workers.org)

**Washington, D.C.**  
P.O. Box 57300  
Washington, DC 20037  
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Workers World  
55 West 17 Street  
New York, N.Y. 10011  
Phone: (212) 627-2994  
Fax: (212) 675-7869  
E-mail: [ww@workers.org](mailto:ww@workers.org)  
Web: [www.workers.org](http://www.workers.org)

Vol. 53, No. 15 • April 21, 2011  
Closing date: April 12, 2011

Editor: Deirdre Griswold

Technical Editor: Lal Roohk

Managing Editors: John Catalinotto, LeiLani Dowell, Leslie Feinberg, Kris Hamel, Monica Moorehead, Gary Wilson

West Coast Editor: John Parker

Contributing Editors: Abayomi Azikiwe, Greg Butterfield, Jaimeson Champion, G. Dunkel, Fred Goldstein, Teresa Gutierrez, Larry Hales, Berta Joubert-Ceci, Cheryl LaBash, Milt Neidenberg, Bryan G. Pfeifer, Betsey Piette, Minnie Bruce Pratt, Gloria Rubac

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Supporter Program: Sue Davis, coordinator

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Workers World (ISSN-1070-4205) is published weekly except the first week of January by WW Publishers, 55 W. 17 St., N.Y., N.Y. 10011. Phone: (212) 627-2994. Subscriptions: One year: \$25; institutions: \$35. Letters to the editor may be condensed and edited. Articles can be freely reprinted, with credit to Workers World, 55 W. 17 St., New York, NY 10011. Back issues and individual articles are available on microfilm and/or photocopy from University Microfilms International, 300 Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Mich. 48106. A searchable archive is available on the Web at [www.workers.org](http://www.workers.org).

A headline digest is available via e-mail subscription. Subscription information is at [www.workers.org/email.php](http://www.workers.org/email.php).

Periodicals postage paid at New York, N.Y.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Workers World, 55 W. 17 St., 5th Floor, New York, N.Y. 10011.



WW PHOTO: SHARON BLACK



# Immigrant youth declare 'Undocumented, unafraid'

By Dianne Mathiowetz  
Atlanta

Hundreds of students from nearby Georgia State University, area high school youth, civil rights leaders and community members gathered in Hurt Park April 5 in Atlanta and listened attentively to the stories of eight young people from Georgia, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Michigan and Illinois who proclaimed that they were coming out of the shadows to openly fight for their rights as human beings. All of them have grown up in the U.S., brought by their parents — seeking relief from conditions of extreme poverty in their home countries and a better life for their children — who have worked for years in this country.

The students wept as they described the fear that they or their parents would be deported — a fear that constantly rules their lives. They spoke about how well they did in school and their dreams of making a contribution to their community as a lawyer, a teacher, a social worker.

The youths talked about all their efforts to win passage of the DREAM Act, which failed to pass in Congress last year. That legislation would have offered tens of thousands of undocumented youth a path to citizenship. They all declared that they were not going to be silent as elected officials use them as political pawns to curry favor with right-wing forces. Before the TV cameras and police agencies, to the roar of approval from their support-

ers, they declared they were “undocumented and unafraid.” One of the goals of the action was to call upon the president of Georgia State University, Mark Becker, to refuse to comply with a Board of Regents’ ban on admitting qualified undocumented youth to study at the institution. Earlier this year, the governing body of Georgia’s public universities, colleges and technical schools capitulated to anti-immigrant pressure and barred undocumented students from the state’s top five public institutions of higher education, including GSU.

These students already have to pay out-of-state tuition, which is almost triple that paid by fellow high school graduates. They are also not eligible for the HOPE scholarship program. Georgia also denies a driver’s license to anyone who does not have papers. Just days before this action, upwards of 8,000 people packed the street in front of the Georgia Capitol to oppose an Arizona SB 1070-style racial profiling law that is pending final passage in the Assembly. Pressure against the anti-immigrant legislation has come from diverse forces, including business interests, religious groups, civil rights organizations and foreign trade leaders, warning that Georgia will become the target of a boycott.

## Sit-in demands ‘education, not deportation’

After delivering a letter to Becker’s office, the protesters marched around the campus, chanting “Education, not deportation” and “Refuse the ban.” In a synchronized action, they placed huge ban-



PHOTO: KUNG LI

Atlanta 7 members from left: Jose Rico Benavides, Maria Marroquin, Dayanna Rebolledo, Andrea Rosales, Georgina Perez, David Ramirez, Viridiana Berenice Martinez.

ners, reading “We will no longer remain in the shadows” and “Will you take a stand?” in the middle of a highly trafficked street, leading to the State Capitol, and sat down. Cars came to a halt; the area was filled with chanting students, TV cameras, photographers and eventually police.

After more than an hour and a great deal of discussion among the several police forces, including campus and Capitol agencies, members of the Atlanta Police Department arrested seven young people to the boos and cries of “shame” from the crowd. Each of these seven youth face the possibility of being deported as a result of their arrest. Held in the Atlanta City

Jail overnight on charges of obstructing traffic, they were all questioned by Immigration and Customs Enforcement about their citizenship but were not turned over to the federal agents. On the morning of April 6, they all were released on \$2,000 bonds. Taking a page from the student actions of the 1960s Civil Rights Movement, there are plans to commit similar acts of civil disobedience in other cities to focus attention on the injustice of immigration policies that criminalize workers, deny young people opportunity, separate families and promote racial profiling. For more information, go to [www.thedreamiscoming.com](http://www.thedreamiscoming.com). □

## ILWU rank-and-file stand with Wisconsin struggle

Continued from page 2

### Interview with Trent Willis

This writer also interviewed ILWU Local 10 member and former president, Trent Willis, who explained the April 4 action by his local’s members.



**TW:** We understand the attack [on Local 10] and how serious it is. We face an all-out assault on unions in this country. Membership is down to 10 percent or fewer of organized workers. The effects are starting to show.

Dr. Martin Luther King is a hero. He showed the connection between the union movement and the social movement. When the brothers and sisters start putting it together, we are stronger. Working and unemployed, everyone is a worker. We need to make them not be unemployed, but to have jobs.

I am proud I stood by in honor of the Wisconsin workers. I am glad my brothers and sisters stood with me. The fight is not over. This is either a new beginning or an

# Rally for economic justice



PROVIDENCE, R.I.

The Rhode Island Progressive Network sponsored a Martin Luther King Jr. Unity Day Rally at the Rhode Island statehouse in Providence April 4 to demand jobs and human needs, freedom, equality, peace, civil rights and civil liberties, workers’ rights and economic rights. The R.I. Unemployed Council put forth an Economic Bill of Rights which includes tax the rich, not the poor; end tax-breaks, bailouts and welfare for the rich; enact progressive income and corporate taxes; fund a war on poverty at home, not wars and occupations abroad; bring the troops home now; ensure that everyone has the right to a job, housing, utilities, education, health care, secure retirement and disability income. The rally was chaired by Mary Kay Harris, a lead organizer from Direct Action for Rights and Equality.

— Report and photo by Bill Bateman

April 4 rally, Providence.

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end of the labor movement, as we know it.

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STAND WITH WISCONSIN



# Workers and students unite to fight budget cut measures

By **Andy Koch**  
**Chapel Hill, N.C.**

What began as an act of protest on April 7 by a section of maintenance workers against schedule changes at the University of North Carolina here culminated in the largest worker protest on the campus in nearly a decade.

A few weeks ago, maintenance workers were informed of a major change in their work schedule. Instead of being able to work four 10-hour days each week, they would be forced to work five eight-hour days. Many workers choose the compressed work week because it saves them money on childcare and transportation, enables them to have a second job on the weekend, and helps with family life. For the more than 70 workers who choose the compressed schedule, the proposed changes would effectively amount to a pay cut.

On April 7, 10 skilled-trades workers took the day off to sit on the steps of the

administrative building in an effort to have their voices heard. Other workers from all across campus, students and community members united around the bold action of the workers. At noon more than 200 supporters and 40 other workers joined them on the steps of the administrative building to hear the workers speak.

Chuck Grant, a mason, criticized management for pushing the decision through without input from the workers and in the name of budget cuts and “efficiency.” “They say that this change will save the university money, but they don’t put up any proof!” Grant said to the crowd. “I say, show us the figures!”

Dave Brannigan, a groundskeeper, called on the administration to shoulder their share of the budget cuts. “This’ll cost us in gas, because most of us live 20, 30, 50 miles away. We don’t live in Chapel Hill — we can’t afford to!” Brannigan continued, “We’ve sacrificed enough. It’s time for the administration to sacrifice some!”

Some 10 minutes into the rally, Grant announced that someone from UNC’s Human Resources Department was photographing and taking down the names of every worker who attended the protest in a clear attempt to intimidate and silence those gathered there. “If they want my name,” Grant said, “tell them to come up here and I’ll spell it for them.” A climate of fear about speaking out is present in many sectors on the UNC-CH campus.

Odessa Davis, a housekeeper and leader of the North Carolina Public Service Workers Union, United Electrical Workers Local 150, spoke out in solidarity with the maintenance workers. “I support their cause because the problem ain’t just over with them. It’s all over campus.”

Workers from beyond the campus also spoke out in support and addressed broader problems in North Carolina. “I was fired from Central Regional State Hospital for an honest mistake that was a result of inadequate help and staffing,” said Rebecca

Hart, also a leader of Local 150. “This sort of treatment by management is unacceptable. We need to protect our workers.”

After the workers spoke, the microphone was turned over to representatives of various student organizations that partnered with the workers to plan the protest and rally. In viciously anti-union North Carolina, the subject of unions is rarely brought up. However, Laurel Ashton, an organizer with Student Action with Workers, stressed the importance of workers having their own organization: “We need to form a workers’ association — if not a union, then something as close to a union as possible.”

A student from Students for a Democratic Society drew the connection between the attacks facing workers and the tuition hikes that students face: “It’s so important that workers and students stand together to fight against budget cuts. It’s only together that we will have the power to stop these measures in their tracks.” □

## DETROIT

# Coalition steps up foreclosure fight

By **Kris Hamel**  
**Detroit**

The ongoing struggle for a moratorium to halt mass foreclosures is gaining new steam in Detroit and Wayne County, Mich. On April 6 scores of labor, faith and community activists filled the sanctuary at Greater St. Matthew’s Baptist Church in Highland Park, Mich., for a press conference held by the People Before Banks Coalition to announce the introduction of the “Homeowner Protection and Neighborhood Preservation Act” before the Wayne County Commission on April 7.

Commissioner Martha G. Scott of Highland Park, a former state senator who introduced the act, opened the press conference, followed by coalition organizers and leaders, including the Rev. Bill Wylie-Kellerman; Bob King, president of the United Auto Workers international union; Dave Ivers on behalf of Metro Detroit AFL-CIO President Sandra Williams; Pastor D. Alexander Bullock, president of Rainbow PUSH Detroit and senior pastor of Greater St. Matthew’s; and Jerry Goldberg and Vanessa Fluker, anti-foreclosure attorneys and leaders in the Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures, Evictions & Utility Shut-offs.

The act “[seeks] to protect homeowners, preserve our neighborhoods, and insure the proper documentation and

payment of county fees for mortgage assignments” by A) calling for “an independent audit of foreclosure sales to determine the extent to which the county and its citizens have been victimized and economically harmed by the fraudulent practices of banks and mortgage servicers; B) urg[ing] the Sheriff to implement a moratorium on foreclosure sales of occupied residential housing for one year; and C) plac[ing] the issue of implementing such a moratorium on the Nov. 8, 2011, ballot as an advisory question.”

“The sheriff should not be supporting those who break the law,” declared King. “The banks got a \$700 billion bailout and now they refuse to help homeowners. We have to look at this in the broader context of the out-and-out attacks on working people. We have to fight for fairness and justice.”

A coalition release noted that “more than 100,000 Michigan homes were foreclosed in 2010, according to the Center for Responsible Lending. Wayne County alone accounted for one-quarter of that total and more than 400 foreclosure auctions a week, according to RealtyTrac.”

“Not only did the banks get the big bailouts everyone’s heard of, but the banks are still getting bailed out — they get paid the full mortgage value by the federal government when they foreclose on homeowners and their families,” said Fluker. “The banks won’t stop foreclo-

sure because foreclosures are too lucrative for them. We have to stop them.”

### Time to ‘hold banks accountable’

The proposed bill states, “The process of mortgage origination, securitization, rating, and foreclosure has been characterized by allegations of massive fraud, from the predatory lending practices of subprime mortgage companies, to the deceptive practices of Wall Street underwriters, to the misrepresentation of security valuations by ratings agencies, to the improper recording of mortgage assignments and evasion of county fees, to the counterfeiting of mortgage documents and robo-signing of affidavits at foreclosure.”

Person after person stood up at the April 7 County Commission meeting during the public comments section to voice their support for Scott’s proposal. These included the head of the Jefferson-Chalmers neighborhood association on Detroit’s east side. Goldberg urged the commission to put the moratorium on the November ballot and told how the U.S. Supreme Court upheld foreclosure moratoriums in Michigan and other states during the Great Depression. Nancy Brigham supported Scott’s measure and a moratorium. “My home on the east side is one of those that was saved in the 1930s,” she said.

Steve Babson also supported the moratorium and said foreclosures were similar to the attacks of “elimination of the

earned income tax credit, taxing our pensions, cuts in unemployment benefits and cuts to public workers” currently on the legislative agenda in Michigan.

“After next Thursday I’ll be homeless,” said an African-American woman who retired two years ago from Ford Motor Company after more than 30 years on the job. She said the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development refused to help her keep her home of 24 years. “It is too late for me now, but I ask the Commission to support those coming after me and all the people who are in my shoes.”

Fluker arrived late and explained to the Commission and the audience: “I just got done in 36th District Court, because the bank sold my client’s house for one dollar. The arrogance of these banks who refuse to deal with people and then throw them out of their homes for one dollar! This illegal and unscrupulous conduct of the banks is destroying our communities and the economic base of our county. It is imperative to act quickly and hold the banks accountable.”

Wayne County Commissioners Bernard Parker, Tim Killeen and Alisha R. Bell voiced their support for Scott’s proposal.

For more information on the Homeowner Protection and Neighborhood Preservation Act and to get involved in this struggle, visit [www.peoplebeforebanks.org](http://www.peoplebeforebanks.org) or the “People Before Banks Coalition” page on Facebook. □

## Six-month strike ends

# Detroit musicians resisted ‘final offer’

By **Martha Grevatt**  
**Detroit, Mich.**

Since Oct. 4, union-organized symphony players around the country have had their eyes on Detroit. That day members of American Federation of Musicians Local 5 went on strike against the Detroit Symphony Orchestra rather than cave in to management’s demand for a 33 percent pay cut. DSO executives, including the orchestra’s \$400,000-a-year CEO Anne Parsons, also wanted musicians to perform in schools and at community

events without additional compensation.

On April 4, appropriately six months after the strike began, the Negotiating Committee of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra musicians announced a tentative settlement on a new contract.

“It is a strike that we believe management wanted to force on us, seemingly happy to see many of our musicians move on to other orchestras or to just retire — musicians that management would replace with much less experienced, much lower-paid players who will never have known the great DSO we have today,” the

union charged early in the strike.

“It is a strike that we called only after management flatly rejected our proposal to accept more than \$9 million in cuts in salary and benefits, including a 22 percent cut in salary next year. And after management rejected our offer to negotiate even that proposal at our last meeting, provided management also made some concessions.” ([www.detroitssymphony-musicians.org](http://www.detroitssymphony-musicians.org))

Musicians’ repeated offers to meet DSO management halfway were rebuffed, as was an offer to submit outstanding is-

sues to binding arbitration.

The recession was blamed for a decline in endowments from corporate “philanthropists” such as the Kresge and Ford Foundations. At one point, when a settlement seemed close, the banks holding DSO’s debt threatened to call in a \$54 million construction loan. Building Max Fisher Hall — and the resulting indebtedness to Comerica, PNC, JP Morgan Chase, Charter One and Bank of America — was one of the dubious business moves that hurt the orchestra financially.

DSO executives, who typically shifted



## Fighting against austerity

# March 24 was big step forward

By Larry Hales

In the early morning of March 31, the state Legislature of New York passed an austerity budget that cuts more than \$1 billion from education. Cuts to state spending on Medicaid will lead to a loss of federal matching funds that will total \$5 billion. Hundreds of millions more were cut from other vital social services.

While the Legislature, the governor's office and both the Democratic and Republican parties of New York congratulated themselves on a nearly on-time budget — a feat that hadn't been accomplished in years — hundreds of students, community members and labor activists occupied the state Capitol building March 31 in Albany.

More than 1,000 people from across the state had decided to protest both inside and outside the state Capitol as a final showdown against a severe budget that represents a vicious attack against working people in the state of New York.

The response of Gov. Andrew Cuomo, a Democrat, in a similar vein to that of Republican Gov. Scott Walker in Wisconsin, was to use state troopers to deny protesters access to the legislative chambers during the voting process, though the chambers are usually and supposed to be open to the public.

The protesters kept up a spirited rally inside the Capitol — even taking over a major stairwell — a move led by students, many from the State University of New York at Albany. This action was reminiscent of the leading role students and young people played in the February occupation of the state Capitol in Madison, Wis.

Despite the outpouring and contrary to the actual needs of the people of New York, the budget, which did not renew taxes on the wealthy, was passed.

A week before the occupation in Albany, activists in a new alliance of students, community organizations and labor unions mobilized a rally and march of thousands that started at City Hall and proceeded farther downtown to target Wall Street. The march passed by the Federal Reserve and wound up for a final rally back at City Hall.

This march of 6,000 people — rank-and-file union members, people from the oppressed communities and overwhelmingly students — was the beginning of an important alliance crucial to fighting and beating back the austerity program being forced upon the working class of New York and the U.S.

The seeds for the new coalition were planted with student organizing that began late in the fall of 2009. At that time the CUNY [City University of New York] Mobilization Network formed against the cuts of tens of millions of dollars from the CUNY system and against tuition increases.

Inspired by the occupations and mass protests in California that sprung up against a 32 percent tuition increase within the California university system, along

with cuts, layoffs and furloughs, the CUNY students saw the necessity of building a national action to defend public education and to fight back against the imposition of austerity.

March 4, declared as a statewide day of action to defend public education in California, was chosen on a national conference call, after the CUNY students reached out to activists in Connecticut, Ohio, California, Georgia, Maryland, Wisconsin, Michigan and other states.

### Building a militant broad movement

While the March 4 actions were a success both in New York and nationally, it was not nearly enough to



WW PHOTOS: G. DUNKEL AND JOHN CATALINOTTO

Top left, Larry Hales speaking at March 24 rally in New York.

Above, handmade sign reads "pro-worker, pro-union Solidarity with Wisconsin!"



The militant rally participants promised to be back and saved their harshest and most vociferous vitriol for the

turn back the cuts. Its strength, however, lay in it being not only the first nationally coordinated protest since the capitalist crisis began in 2007, but also that it entered into the consciousness of working people around the country, who had been used to soaking up propaganda from major media outlets on the necessity of "shared sacrifice."

"Shared sacrifice" really means that the working class suffers an even greater burden based on the objective nature of the capitalist system. Profit is derived from the exploitation of working people. On top of that, trillions of tax dollars are used to wage war, finance occupation and pay for weapons of destruction that only benefit the superwealthy corporate heads and bankers. Tax money is openly used to bail out banks and financial institutions and allows these capitalists to subsidize the privatization of schools.

The anti-worker laws being passed in Wisconsin, Ohio, Indiana, Michigan and elsewhere cast off the veil entirely and reveal the program of the politicians who do the bidding of the corporate heads and bankers — the ruling class. This program will undo years of gains from working-

class struggle in a much more aggressive manner.

The seeds of this program originated 30 or so years ago. The program's process, however, has sped up as the economic crisis of the capitalist system, or the "Great Recession" — as the media and politicians of both major parties call it — has been used as the excuse. "These are tough times and we all must share the burden," is a common refrain. "There is a lack of revenue. There is no money," they say. But there is \$700 billion for the Pentagon to drop bombs on Libya; wage war in Afghanistan and Iraq; and to prop up brutal regimes around the world, like at least \$50 billion given to Hosni Mubarak, the U.S. puppet recently deposed by a peoples' uprising in Egypt.

On March 24 the broad alliance forged in New York pulled off the largest rally in New York City against the state cutbacks since 2009. This rally was the only one with a progressive program calling for free education, free health care, an end to the wars, taxing of the rich, a stock transfer tax — which is on the books but is not implemented by the state government — and other progressive demands.

portion of the march that wound past the stock exchange. The state of New York is planning an even greater hit on the working class in New York for next year, already suggested by a so-called state deficit totaling more than \$15 billion.

The activists of the coalition in New York, which has named itself New Yorkers Against the Budget Cuts: Students/Community/Labor United, are planning actions throughout the city with other organizations. They are joining with a march on Wall Street planned for May 12, as well as organizing for a showdown with billionaire Mayor Michael Bloomberg, who was recently forced to fire Cathleen Black, the inexperienced schools chancellor who was plucked from Hearst Magazines.

What the ruling class has in store is more war against the working class and oppressed in the U.S. and the only way to meet the force of the ruling class onslaught is a greater force of multinational, working-class unity, of all sectors, armed with a working-class program to defend our interests and fight for something much better.

*Hales is a leading organizer of the CUNY Mobilization Network and was a co-chair of the March 24 rally.*

*Continued from page 4*

blame to worker salaries, had board ties to both the funders and the debt holders. Five of six top DSO executives and three paid consultants were donors to the Campaign for a New Beginning Fund of the League of American Orchestras. The League holds management conferences on topics such as "The New [anti-union] Reality."

Union musicians feared the League would set a pattern — in Detroit, despite its high union density — to break orchestra unions around the country.

### Solidarity played significant role

Solidarity with the musicians was high. Metro Detroit AFL-CIO President Sandra Williams and United Auto Workers President Bob King were among those who picketed with strikers. Major concerts at Fisher Hall were cancelled after appeals were made to artists not to cross the line. Concerts by DSO musicians at alternative venues were sold out. Players in other major symphonies wore solidarity wristbands during their performances.

The union reached out to the commu-

nity by performing in homeless shelters, including the Ruth Ellis Center for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer youth. (Ellis was an African-American lesbian activist until her death in 2000 at the age of 101.)

The contract imposes steep pay cuts, but not the one-third cut demanded by Parsons and her corporate cohorts. Artists who give additional performances will be paid for their work. A major strength is the absence of the divisive — but all-too-common — two-tier pay structure.

What the capitalist media never mentioned — but a major sticking point for the union — was management's racist and sexist plan to end audio-only auditions-where players are behind a screen and judges listen without knowing the artist's race, gender, age, weight or any trait that might lead to discrimination. The union won — the screen stays!

Free concerts celebrating the end of the strike — with advance reservations required — were sold out in a matter of hours. □



# On East Coast, West Coast — Thousands

## NEW YORK CITY, APRIL 9

Continued from page 1

to Union Square on May Day for the workers' march that will put immigrant rights front and center. There was strong Black participation as well. Young people were everywhere in the march, many demanding "Education, not occupation." The banners of some of the major unions in the New York area, such as the Transport Workers, were also there.

UNAC hung a large banner — "No U.S./U.N./NATO attack on Libya" — on the speakers' platform. Its protest of the latest imperialist adventure aimed at the people of Libya was a prominent part of the rally.

While it's relatively early in this new imperialist adventure in Africa, this is a time when the heavy pro-intervention propaganda in the corporate media, as in the past, has often convinced the population to support or be neutral about a military adventure. It is significant that UNAC quickly took a strong anti-intervention position.

It is equally significant that the people in the streets reacted so favorably to the anti-war slogans. This reaction was further



WW PHOTOS: BRENDA RYAN; MARSHA GOLDBERG; JOHN CATALINOTTO



evidence that it is possible to win massive opposition to the war in Libya, as well as to the ongoing occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan, which have been brutal abroad and costly at home for nearly a decade.

### Condemn U.S./NATO attack on Libya

Sara Flounders, co-director of the International Action Center and a spokesperson for UNAC, told Workers World that some from outside the coalition had raised doubts that such strong slogans — support for Palestine, ending U.S. aid to the Israeli state, demanding that troops be removed from the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan, stopping drone bombing in Pakistan, opposition to the persecution of Muslim people by the U.S. police apparatus, and fierce opposition to racism and xenophobia — would attract broad support.

"On the contrary," said Flounders, "these slogans that were also connected

to the economic and repressive cutbacks at home brought into the march communities that otherwise would be disenfranchised if the movement ignored their issues. It was also essential," she continued, "that UNAC strongly oppose NATO's assault on Libya and expose the phony argument about 'humanitarian intervention' that the imperialists have used as a pretext for their aggression."

The slogans and talks from the dozens of speakers also brought into play the anti-war movement's support for working and unemployed people in the United States and contrasted the government's easy funding for war with the horrific budget cuts for social services.

"Today's demonstration represents a revitalization of the anti-war movement," said UNAC co-coordinator Marilyn Levin



in a release from that organization, "this time coming back to life as younger and more diverse. The renewed movement connects the war economy to the cuts in basic necessities we face today and demands that we 'Bring the War \$\$ Home.'" "The march stretched for over 20 blocks at one point," said UNAC co-coordinator Joe Lombardo, "and featured at least 18 spirited contingents from communities as diverse as immigrant workers, students, trade unions, socialist groups, Muslims, Palestinians and teachers — each with their own colorful flags, original banners, drums and chants."

UNAC organizers estimated that more than 10,000 people participated and were

pleased with the smooth progression of both the rallies and the march. Others said 15,000 were present. Despite the long list of speakers — each representing a different organization and a different section of the population in struggle, while showing the breadth and scope of the coalition in total — the march kicked off from Union Square on schedule at 2 p.m. with drums and banners in place.

Protests were held around the world simultaneously with this action. Perhaps the most dramatic were held in Iraq itself, where peoples' organizations were protesting outside the major U.S. bases in the occupied country.

A demonstration similar to the one in New York took place on April 10 in San Francisco, also called by UNAC.

"This was a wonderful first step for UNAC," Larry Holmes, a leader of the Bail Out the People Movement and a rally speaker, told this reporter. "We have already seen in Wisconsin the potential for a response to the war on the workers at home. We saw on March 24 that a coalition of workers, community organizations, students and youth could also mobilize here in New York. Today's action extended that unity to fighting the war-makers."

"The next big challenge for the movement will come on May 1," said Holmes, "with an opportunity to unite the immigrant rights struggle with the workers' movement and keep the struggle against imperialist war part of the common struggle." □

## Unions demand: Stop the war against workers



Times Square April 9 WW PHOTO

### By Workers World New York bureau

Thousands of union members came to Times Square on April 9 for the New York state AFL-CIO and its affiliates' "We Are One" rally. New York State United Teachers rented a train from the Long Island Railroad. A number of upstate unions rented buses and about 2,000 NYSUT members marched a few blocks after their annual assembly ended.

Besides the NYSUT members from all over the state, workers from the construction trades — reeling from high unemployment — public service workers, teamsters, actors and public transport workers attended. Because of the cutbacks to the public budgets and the consequent elimination of jobs, NYSUT lost 12,000 active members in 2009-2010 and expects to lose another 15,000 this year.

Two jumbo-trons were rented so speakers could be seen even blocks away. The

sound was of rock-concert quality.

The speakers pointed out the assault on New York's workers. "What we're facing is an attack on working conditions, whether it be overcrowded classrooms or overcrowded docks. It's an attack on collective bargaining," according to Dick Iannuzzi, president of NYSUT.

Dennis Van Roekel, president of the National Education Association, said, "There are times in life that are do-or-die moments. This is one of those moments."

Professional Staff Congress President Barbara Bowen demanded, "Stop the war on workers!" The PSC represents faculty and professional staff at the City University of New York.

The speeches were militant in tone and there was general agreement that there is a serious attack coming down on the labor movement. There was, however, no agreement expressed on what should be the next step for the labor movement. □



# Thousands protest U.S. wars abroad, at home

## SAN FRANCISCO, APRIL 10

By Workers World San Francisco bureau

Three thousand activists demonstrated against U.S. wars abroad on April 10 in San Francisco. Protesters rallied in Dolores Park in the city's Mission district both before and after a march through the community. The United National Antiwar Committee sponsored the actions. Those who attended were buoyed by what they described as "the renewal of the anti-war movement."

UNAC Co-coordinator Jeff Mackler called April 10 "a modest but important political success. We effectively got out the strong political message and demands that were in accord with the democratic decisions of the July 22-24, 2010, Albany, N.Y. conference," which called for the demonstrations in New York and San Francisco.

Mackler pointed out, "Virtually all speakers presented clear and unequivocal positions demanding the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all U.S. troops, mercenaries and military contractors from Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and now Libya." He also noted the broad, inclusive and diverse nature of the speakers list.

Speakers at the rally included Jessica Antonio, BAYAN; Porfirio Quintano, Hondurans in Resistance; Monadell Herzala, Arab-America Union Members Council; Cristina Gutierrez of Barrio Unido; John Caldero, Veterans for Peace; Mick Kelly, Committee to Stop FBI Repression; Judy Greenspan, teacher and Workers World Party member; and Frank Lara, Answer Coalition.

Many speakers acknowledged the upcoming May Day demonstrations and called on protesters to not only attend, but also help to build for these actions, which are very important, given the attacks on immigrants around the country.

### Speakers link opposition to foreign wars to war against U.S. workers

Keynote speaker, Malalai Joya, an Afghan writer, activist and former politician, denounced the U.S./NATO military attacks and occupation of Afghanistan, which are killing women and children and other civilians and destroying the country. Joya called for all foreign troops to leave her country and denounced the U.S.-backed government of Hamid Karzai.



Cephus Johnson tied political and police repression at home to wars abroad. Johnson is the uncle of Oscar Grant, the unarmed African-American youth who was fatally shot in the back two years ago by Johannes Mehserle, a police officer of the Bay Area Rapid Transit system.

Clarence Thomas, dockworker and member of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10, told of the shutdown of the ports in San Francisco and Oakland, Calif., on April 4, the anniversary of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King's assassination. Dockworkers held these actions as an act of solidarity with Wisconsin public sector workers and to support their resistance. The Pacific Maritime Association, Thomas explained, is now suing the ILWU for the so-called "illegal work stoppage."



WW PHOTO: TOVA FRY

Rally co-chair Judy Greenspan, with cap.

Jeff Patterson spoke about conditions for veterans and the inhumane incarceration of political prisoner PFC Bradley Manning at a Marine prison in Quantico,



PHOTOS: PATRICIA JACKSON

Rally speaker John Parker, above, with Libya sign.

W.Va. Manning has been imprisoned without trial since July for allegedly passing privileged information to WikiLeaks about U.S. war policy.

John Parker, West Coast International Action Center coordinator, spoke about growing U.S.-led or -backed wars and occupations in the Middle East and North Africa, which are killing and injuring our brothers and sisters there. To great applause, he stated, "We have a right to our jobs and our homes, and no CEO or sheriff has the right to throw us out of either of them. And capitalism, be damned. "There's no power greater than the power of a people united from Wisconsin to the public workers here in California; from Black, Asian and Latino/a activists fighting the police and ICE; to our sisters and brothers incarcerated by injustice; to women and lesbian, gay, bi, transgender, queer warriors against oppression. If we unite, we have the power to shut down the wars over there and over here!"

Mackler thanked the six co-chairs of the rallies — "a diverse group of UNAC and social justice leaders, including Bill Balderston, Daniel Alley, Judy Greenspan, Zahra Billoo, Kitty Liu and Blanca Missé." He also called attention to the good coverage given by radio station KPFA, which broadcast the rallies live and conducted interviews with many activists who attended. □



PHOTO: PATRICIA JACKSON

Keynote speaker Malalai Joya, above.

## Mass rally in Baghdad opposes Iraq occupation

By Caleb T. Maupin

Eight years ago the U.S. army poured into Iraq, where it overthrew the Ba'athist-led government using the pretext of alleged "weapons of mass destruction." On April 9, 2003, the Pentagon orchestrated a media stunt to build popular support for a nearly universally opposed, unprovoked invasion.

A group of pro-U.S. Iraqis, who had just returned from exile, entered Firdos Square, which had been blocked off by the U.S. military. Under the direction of professional television producers and with the U.S. Marines' truck and chains, they toppled a statue of Saddam Hussein before the cameras of CNN, FOX and MSNBC and thanked the U.S. for bombing and destroying their country.

It was eventually revealed that the U.S. Army's Department of "Psychological Operations" had staged the entire event to build public support for the invasion. The

military's blatant attempt to deceive the public in order to build support for the war was never treated as a scandal or widely discussed. (Los Angeles Times, July 3, 2004)

But as the Greek philosopher Heraclitus stated about 2,500 years ago: "The only thing constant is change."

On April 9, eight years after this stage-managed rally, the streets of Baghdad were filled with students, youth, workers and others from all across Iraq. Their message was very different from the one in 2003.

This year's protest began on April 8 when a crowd of 300 gathered in a square in Baghdad to protest the crimes of the U.S. occupiers, as well as the economic devastation following the U.S. invasion. According to CNN, this crowd has gathered every Friday since Feb. 25 to protest the disappearance of health care, employment and the other economic benefits that existed under the Ba'athist government.

These benefits have been replaced by the bullets of U.S. troops and the mercenaries who protect the oil, which has been stolen to benefit imperialist corporations.

This April 8 the crowd grew to 2,000 people, who marched holding placards with names of dead relatives and demanding an end to the occupation. (CNN World, April 8)

The next day, as 10,000 protesters hit New York City streets to denounce the occupation, the Baghdad demonstrators protested U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates' April 8 comment that the U.S. may stay in Iraq for as many as 10 more years. Muslim Cleric Muktada al-Sadr, in exile in Iran, sent a message to his supporters and followers to protest the U.S. occupation in response to Gates' comments.

Al-Sadr's statements in support of "military resistance" as well as "peaceful and public resistance" were picked up not only by thousands in the streets,

but also by several members of the Iraqi parliament. (New York Times, April 10) Contingents of people from across Iraq poured into Baghdad on buses to protest the U.S. occupation and demand that the U.S. leave Iraq by the end of the year.

Muntazer Al-Zaidi, who was imprisoned and beaten in December 2008 for throwing his shoes at then-President George W. Bush on his last visit to Iraq, had called for demonstrations and endorsed the rally. He now leads a mass organization called the Popular Movement to Save Iraq.

Leaders of the General Federation of Iraqi Workers also supported the call for an escalation of protests.

Ali Husain, a high school student from southern Iraq who participated in the Baghdad protests, told the New York Times, "We will expel the occupier." (April 9) The continued demonstrations under harsh conditions show that numerous Iraqis share his sentiments. □



## IN WISCONSIN

# Struggle continues in courts & streets

By Bryan G. Pfeifer

The ongoing people's struggle in Wisconsin won a victory in the April 5 elections when independent Wisconsin Supreme Court Judge JoAnne Kloppenburg won a seat in the Wisconsin Supreme Court over Justice David Prosser, a Republican conservative. It was announced on April 5 that Kloppenburg had won the election by a few hundred votes.

However, another battle in the class war in Wisconsin erupted when Kathy Nickolaus, county clerk in predominantly conservative Waukesha, Wis., declared at a press conference April 6 that she had "found" more votes for Prosser. Nickolaus said that she had made a "human error" in recording vote totals, and that the real total is 7,500 more for Prosser than reported on election night. These numbers put Prosser in front, conveniently out of range of a state-financed recount.

The election for justices on the Wisconsin Supreme Court historically has a lower turnout than many other statewide elections. But an illegal union busting bill signed by Gov. Scott Walker on March 11 is to be taken up by the court in the near future. The bill would essentially eliminate collective bargaining rights for up to 200,000 public sector workers and cut health care insurance for the poor, amid other draconian cuts. There is currently an injunction stopping the bill from being published, since publishing it would make it enforceable.

This election, therefore, took on deep significance and became, in many ways, a referendum against union busting and in support of collective bargaining.

Nickolaus formerly worked for Prosser when he was a Republican assemblyperson in Madison, Wis., and in 2002 was granted immunity from testifying during Republican caucus investigations concerning campaign finance violations by Republican legislators and their staff. Since taking her position as county clerk she has demanded that election data stay on her personal computer, under her personal control.

Prosser has hired Ben Ginsberg, a Republican lawyer who worked on the Flor-



New Berlin protest, April 11.

PHOTO: WISCONSIN AFL-CIO

ida recount for George W. Bush in 2000. ([www.progressive.org](http://www.progressive.org))

The Kloppenburg forces are fighting for a recount and for other redress. Kloppenburg joined the Rev. Jesse Jackson Jr. and others at Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church in Milwaukee on April 8 to protest and strategize the fightback. A protest at the Waukesha county clerk's office took place that same day.

But, as with the labor-community-student struggle that has broken out in Wisconsin since Feb. 11 — when Walker issued his "budget repair bill" — the people of Wisconsin aren't relying exclusively on the courts and the Legislature. They are engaging in numerous direct actions and other protest actions statewide. The people's uprising in Wisconsin is in full swing, as seen in the numerous April 4 "We Are One" actions.

Rallies took place in Milwaukee on April 4 and in Madison on April 9, while other protest actions took place statewide throughout the week. The progressive coalition Wisconsin Wave sponsored a People's Assembly on April 9 and 10 in Madison that focused on ways to fight the Walker administration's union busting tactics; strategizing on how to build a people's movement; and researching where the money is — the banks, corporations and the Pentagon — and how

to get it, among other issues. The progressive coalition Wisconsin Resists has been mobilizing on various fronts in Madison as well.

Poor and working people across the state, either as part of an organization or individually, are engaged in recall campaigns, building protest events and more. Facebook, blogs and other communications are helping to build the people's movement.

On April 11 in New Berlin, Wis., a city of 38,000 people between Milwaukee and Waukesha, the largest pro-worker-rights rally in the history of the city took place.

Sandy Jacobs, an occupational therapist at Milwaukee Mental Health Complex and member of the Wisconsin Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals, joined the New Berlin protest. She has worked for 25 years as a health professional — both with and without a union.

"I am here because having a union — having a voice on the job — is crucial to patient care. Attacking workers' rights is not what I value as a Wisconsinite. We need our representatives to listen to the people," said Jacobs. "I am here to hold my elected officials accountable." ([wisafclcio.typepad.com](http://wisafclcio.typepad.com))

Mobilizing is also going on statewide to pack public hearings in regard to Walker's 2011-2013 budget, which, according to

the Wisconsin State AFL-CIO, "calls for the most extreme cuts to public education and public services ever proposed in Wisconsin history." ([wisafclcio.typepad.com/](http://wisafclcio.typepad.com/)) These draconian cuts, if rammed through, will affect all poor and working people in the state, but will affect people of color, women and children the worst.

### 'We will not give in'

Beginning April 4, more than 1,000 "We Are One" protests, rallies, candlelight vigils and other actions took place in every state in the United States.

According to the AFL-CIO, its affiliates, Change To Win federation affiliates and numerous other unions, community and student organizations took to the streets to say no to union busting and the vicious assaults by Wall Street on poor and working people.

One of the largest actions took place in Chicago on April 9. A major rally to protest union busting, anti-people attacks and to support the people's resistance in Wisconsin took place at Daley Plaza and brought together thousands of labor-community-student forces in a rally sponsored by the Chicago Federation of Labor, AFL-CIO. Numerous speakers denounced the attempt by the banks and corporations to bust unions and cut funding for direly needed services.

Bill Lucy, retired secretary-treasurer of the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees and the highest ranking African-American union official in the U.S., was the featured speaker. Lucy, who was with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. in Memphis when he was killed on April 4, 1968, said King would have been on the front lines in Madison if he were still alive.

"Brothers and sisters, I don't know what ship you may have come over on, but we are in the same boat now," Lucy said of the looming threat that other states might follow Wisconsin's lead. "We will not give up. We will not give out. We will not give in." (Chicago Sun Times, April 10)

To help and for more information, visit [www.wisafclcio.org](http://www.wisafclcio.org); [wisafclcio.typepad.com](http://wisafclcio.typepad.com); [www.vdlf.org](http://www.vdlf.org); [www.defendwisconsin.org](http://www.defendwisconsin.org); and [www.bailoutpeople.org](http://www.bailoutpeople.org). □

## A brief history of Wisconsin

By Joe Johnson  
Chippewa Falls, Wis.

Less than a year ago the Tea Party was able to attract considerable publicity around a rally it held in Wausau, Wis.

High unemployment and foreclosures, plant closings, the virtual disappearance of family and middle-sized farms, and their displacement by larger factory farms had the people of this state angry and confused. But extreme right-wing movements are a sign of the weakness of the capitalist class, not its strength.

In just a few weeks of working-class action and struggle, a major shift in union and class consciousness has taken place here in Wisconsin.

It is instructive to briefly go over the history of this state. The land was stolen from the Native people, mostly the Ojibway, who had lived here for more than 10,000 years. That is where the name Chippewa comes from. Immigrants from Ireland and France began settling along the upper Chippewa River in the late 17th century.

The first natural resource exploited here was the pine — big, straight trees that produced the greatest lumber in the world. English lumber barons got rich off the labor of French and Irish lumberjacks like my grandfather.

Chippewa Falls for a while had the largest sawmill under one roof in the world. The logs and lumber were floated down the Chippewa River by river people, mostly French and Native men. V. R. Dunne, a Minneapolis union leader in the tempestuous struggles of the 1930s and a good friend of this writer in his old age, had been one such river person.

The exploiters cut the beautiful, straight timber, made their money and left relatively quickly. They left behind, however, another resource — the very rich soil. This was not flat prairies, like much of the Midwest, but small hills and valleys of rich grassland, perfect for cows and small family farms.

Soon there were more cows than people, and Wisconsin was the largest producer of milk and cheese in the country, exporting to other states and the world.

Only in the area around Lake Michigan did much industry grow up.

### Capitalist parties: no solution for the workers

Politically, the people of Wisconsin were very opposed to slavery and a plantation-type economy. The Republican Party was actually founded in Wisconsin in 1854. It was a new national party opposed to the spread of slavery into the Western territories. It soon had three divisions: a center, a far left and a far right — all with their own newspapers and followers.

The far right of the Wisconsin Republican Party eventually produced reactionaries like Sen. Joseph McCarthy and the John Birch Society. Out of the far left came the Populists and Progressives. This often led to great political swings in the state.

In that period, the Democratic Party hardly existed in Wisconsin, except during national presidential campaigns. The Republicans, however, had a strong social base among the farmers.

By the 1940s, Wisconsin's economy was changing. The thousands of small

dairies were being bought up by Kraft Foods. Soon small family farms were becoming large family farms. Later these were either absorbed by or became larger industrial farms that hired tens and even hundreds of laborers at low wages.

Industries began to develop in the Milwaukee area and the unions got a foothold there. Union members were able to get signatures to put Democratic Party candidates on the ballot. Auto and eventually computer factories came to the state, made a lot of money and have mostly gone elsewhere today. The Democratic Party, which grew in this period, has now grown weak.

Today hardly any family farms remain. Only a few specialty cheese producers and dairies that handle perhaps half a percent of Wisconsin's cheese and milk production remain independent. Kraft Foods, however, has become a transnational corporation with \$50 billion in net annual revenue and more than half its business outside of North America.

The Republican Party, which had been

*Continued on page 10*



# Two sides of U.S. Latin America policy: Colombia and Ecuador

By Berta Joubert-Ceci

The U.S. government’s façade that it is a champion of democracy and respectful of other countries’ sovereignty has once again been torn away by Washington’s recent treatment of two distinct governments in two Latin American countries: Colombia and Ecuador.

On April 6 President Barack Obama, praising Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos, reached a deal to push through the anti-worker Free Trade Agreement between the two countries. The pact has been stalled due to Colombia’s horrible record of crimes against unionists.

A day earlier, the U.S. State Department refused to apologize or even explain a letter attacking Ecuadorian President Rafael Correa written by the U.S. ambassador in that country and exposed through Wikileaks.

### FTA with Colombia attacks working people

Reversing his previous position demanding union rights in Colombia before accepting FTA approval, President Obama issued the “Action Plan Related to Labor Rights” on April 6. According to the press release, this FTA “will expand U.S. goods exports alone by more than \$1.1 billion and give key U.S. goods and services duty-free access in sectors from manufacturing to agriculture. It will increase U.S. GDP by \$2.5 billion and support thousands of additional U.S. jobs.” (www.whitehouse.gov)

The website includes a fact sheet and the steps that the Colombian government will supposedly take to ensure the safety of unionized workers. It establishes quick deadlines for many tasks geared to protect workers and prosecute crimes, which should be finished by this summer. It sounds good, but has no provision for enforcement.

The Colombian Unitary Confederation of Workers and the Colombian Confederation of Workers issued a joint declaration opposing the deal based on the lack of enforcement and the complete disregard of the unions’ involvement. The two

union groups consider the crimes that the U.S.-allied state has committed against its people too immense and horrific to quickly pass a deal without addressing them in a serious way.

The declaration reads in part: “It is a free trade agreement that will have few impacts in the generation of new productive activities and services in Colombia, and on the other hand, puts at risk of destruction a considerable number of companies. In terms of employment, the FTA will not generate new jobs, because those generated in some sectors will be lost in others.

“It’s a free trade agreement with a country that has been and continues to suffer from a great humanitarian tragedy, which has meant the death of hundreds of thousands of people, the disappearance of more than 40,000, the displacement of about 4 million and the usurpation of more than 12 million acres of productive land.

“Colombia has suffered the most serious anti-union violence occurring throughout the world; from 1986 to the present day, 2,861 trade unionists have been killed and more than 11,000 acts of violence against trade unionists have been committed. The previous year, 52 unionists were killed, during this year four, and 20 during the government of President Santos.

“We are convinced that the action plan agreed between Presidents Obama and Santos will not contribute to substantially improve this picture of systematic violations of fundamental human rights. Promises are insufficient. ... What is required are concrete, durable and verifiable facts.”

In the U.S., the United Steelworkers, the Teamsters and the Service Employees unions have issued statements opposing the trade plan and supporting their Colombian sisters and brothers.

### Who is Santos?

Since the current president of Colombia has been portrayed as a “democratic,” “just” and “peaceful” person, especially compared with his paramilitary predecessor Alvaro Uribe, it is important to set the record straight.

First and foremost we should point out that Santos, a graduate of U.S. and British universities and a member of the Colombian oligarchy who took office in August, was Uribe’s loyal Minister of Defense from 2006 to 2009 and was thus responsible for heinous crimes. Among them, the infamous case of the “false positives.” These were civilians, many of them youth, assassinated by the Colombian armed forces, who were later called “guerrillas killed in combat.”

According to an article by Hernando Calvo Ospina, a Colombian journalist exiled in France, “When Santos arrived at the Ministry, in July 2006, there were 274 cases of ‘false positives.’ The following year, it climbed to the top: 505 murdered.” (Le Monde Diplomatique en español, March 2011)

Santos was also responsible for the bombing of the FARC encampment on the border of Ecuador that killed Commander Raul Reyes and 24 other people, including four Mexican and one Ecuadorian student.

During his presidency, Santos continues the close relationship with Washington, particularly in military matters. He has committed Colombian military counterinsurgent units to the U.S. war against Afghanistan and has sent the Colombian military to train armies in other U.S.-allied countries in Latin America.

In Colombia Santos continues Uribe’s criminal policies, only under a different name. Uribe called the violent anti-insurgency military campaign responsible for thousands of murders of unionists, peasants, Indigenous people, journalists and other social activists “Democratic Security.” Santos renamed it “Democratic Prosperity.”

Now Santos says the murderous paramilitaries no longer exist and what’s left is just a “criminal gang” they call BACRIM.

### Why the U.S./Colombia FTA now?

Despite the many “democratic” justifications both governments expound, they are in reality pursuing the deal to benefit their financial interests at the expense of working people in both countries who are

already suffering from the economic crisis.

Resistance to the trade pact, however, is palpable in Colombia and in the U.S. On April 7, there were successful demonstrations in Colombia where different sectors, including unions, students, retired workers, teachers, small business owners and broad social movements, came together to oppose the neoliberal plan.

### U.S. ambassador in Ecuador refuses explanation

On April 5, U.S. Ambassador in Ecuador Heather Hodges refused to give any explanation to Rafael Correa’s government regarding a cable Wikileaks revealed. In that cable Hodges wrote that there was widespread corruption within Ecuadorian police and that President Correa had appointed a former police commander, knowing he was corrupt. (Telesur)

Ecuadorian Foreign Affairs Minister Ricardo Patiño demanded an explanation. Hodges replied only that the cables had been stolen and neither she nor Washington had anything to say.

“Considering the response insufficient and unsatisfactory, the government of Ecuador decided to consider Hodges as a persona non grata and asked her to leave the country in the shortest possible time.” (andes.info.ec, April 5)

On April 7 the Obama administration, instead of responding to Correa’s request for an explanation, expelled the Ecuadorian ambassador.

President Correa has held several interviews and radio talks on this issue. Correa said that although he did not personally know former Police Chief Jaime Hurtado, this officer will, in due time, “have to defend his honor.” Correa also said that Hurtado was probably attacked “because Hurtado was the one who helped disband the [police] units that were financed by the CIA and were paid by the U.S. embassy.” (andes.info.ec, April 7)

Correa described Hodges’ behavior as shameful, stating that “in Latin America at least, colonialism was finished and what they will encounter in Ecuador is dignity and sovereignty.” □

## NO JUSTICE!

# Bomber of Cuban plane is acquitted

By Cheryl LaBash

An El Paso, Texas, jury acquitted Luis Posada Carriles of 11 counts of perjury, obstruction and immigration fraud on April 8, saying it found “reasonable doubt” that he had lied to U.S. immigration officials.

One fact is very clear. The U.S. government is fully aware — and has ample evidence — that Posada is responsible for the first mid-air bombing of a commercial airliner, Cubana 455, in which all 73 people aboard were killed in 1976; and for the bombing of several Havana hotels, in which Italian tourist Fabio Di Celmo was killed and others injured.

Shortly after Posada entered the U.S. in 2005, Venezuela issued a formal request for his extradition to stand trial for the bombing of Cubana 455, which exploded off the coast of Barbados as the plane was en route to Havana. The U.S. government has not officially responded to or acted on that. Venezuela has jurisdiction because the deadly conspiracy was hatched there and executed by Posada-hired bombers.

On April 11, the Venezuelan Ministry of Foreign Affairs delivered a diplomat-

ic note to the U.S. Embassy in Caracas demanding that the U.S. government comply with a long-standing extradition treaty between both countries and Venezuela’s request for Posada’s extradition. (http://t.co/29XXMHU)

The testimony of U.S. prosecution witnesses presented during the 13-week trial leaves no doubt that Posada — as he himself boasted — engineered and participated in the murder of innocents for more than 50 years, ever since the failed U.S. invasion of Cuba at Playa Giron (Bay of Pigs).

Attorney Jose Pertierra’s day-by-day “El Paso Diary” chronicles the damning testimony. (http://en.cubadebate.cu) Just a few highlights include journalist Anna Louise Bardache affirming that Posada claimed responsibility for the hotel and plane bombings, as she had written in a 1998 New York Times series; a money trail of receipts and faxes outlining payments from Posada to the hired bombers, who are now serving 30-year prison sentences in Cuba; and a witness who heard Posada discuss the bombings and saw the bomb-making materials in Guatemala.

The Miami-based U.S. attorney who



### FREE THE CUBAN 5:

Gerardo Hernández Nordelo, Ramón Labañino Salazar, Rene González Sehwerert, Antonio Guerrero Rodríguez and Fernando González Llort.

refused a request from the Department of Homeland Security to press criminal charges against Posada also prosecuted the Cuban Five. He refused to change the Five’s trial venue, and is responsible for their long prison terms.

### Workers World calls verdict ‘an outrage’

Workers World Party Secretariat member Teresa Gutierrez, a major organizer of the 1992 Peace with Cuba mass meeting in New York’s Javits Center, told this reporter: “The verdict and minimal charges are an outrage and insult to the people of Cuba, the families of those slain and the loved ones of the five Cuban heroes unjustly held in U.S. prisons for 13 years. But it is also an outrage to the residents in the U.S. that Posada and his partner in crime, Orlando Bosch, walk

freely to boast about their murderous terror attacks with impunity.

“The U.S. government talks anti-terrorism as a cover to expand its imperialist military aggression around the globe,” Gutierrez continued. “U.S. refuge for admitted terrorists like Posada and Bosch proves that point. The U.S. hasn’t relented in its 110-year dream to subjugate the people of Cuba and all of Jose Martí’s Latin America. In the State Department alone, \$20 million is budgeted for 2012 to craft a façade of internal opposition to the Cuban revolution. An additional \$5 million is aimed at Venezuela.

“We say extradite Posada and free the Cuban Five — Gerardo Hernández, Antonio Guerrero, Ramón Labañino, Fernando González and René González. The time is now.” □



# Budget garbage

Feeling sluggish? Need a jolt stronger than a third cup of coffee? Here's something that ought to get your blood circulating — boiling, in fact.

The Wall Street Journal has found out where the budget problem comes from: too many taxes on the rich.

Surprised? Did you think the rich pay hardly any taxes, while working people are stuck with the cost of all those wars and prisons? Funny, so did we.

But the Journal, after presumably doing a lot of digging, found an expert who can explain why just the opposite is true. It's worth quoting their article of March 26, "The Price of Taxing the Rich." You're gonna love it.

"As Brad Williams walked the halls of the California state capitol in Sacramento on a recent afternoon, he spotted a small crowd of protesters battling state spending cuts. They wore shiny white buttons that said 'We Love Jobs!' and argued that looming budget reductions will hurt the Golden State's working class.

"Mr. Williams shook his head. 'They're missing the real problem,' he said.

"The working class may be taking a beating from spending cuts used to close a cavernous deficit, Mr. Williams said, but the root of California's woes is its reliance on taxing the wealthy."

There's another Brad Williams who is a stand-up comedian, but this one will make you laugh till you cry.

So here's his argument: California, where he used to be the chief economist and forecaster for the California Legislative Analyst's Office, got too comfortable depending on taxes from rich people. Then came the economic crisis and their nine-figure incomes became "volatile." So state revenues took a hit.

The conclusion? The state shouldn't have "relied" on getting taxes from the rich. You get it? Don't tax the rich because their incomes are not stable. One year they may have made \$350 million and the next year only \$250 million because the markets went down.

This is a very interesting argument. Let's look at it from another point of view. When there's a recession/depression, millions of workers lose their jobs. Their incomes might go from \$40,000 a year to \$15,000. So they'll barely be paying taxes. Hey, maybe they shouldn't have been taxed in the first place. Then the state and federal governments wouldn't miss that money if the economy goes down.

The fly in the ointment of Williams' innovative theory is that the rich already pay very little in taxes.

In the 28 years from 1979 to 2007, the pre-tax income of the top 1 percent of families in the U.S. rose by 141 percent. But what they had left after

taxes soared by 281 percent, going from an average income of \$346,600 to \$1,319,700. The Reagan and Bush tax cuts for the rich allowed them to double and triple the already-high rate of growth of their incomes.

In the same period, the after-tax income of the lowest fifth of the population rose by only \$2,400, amounting to just 16 percent. (Congressional Budget Office figures)

The obscene growth of wealth at one pole and poverty at the other speeded up even more in 2008, and then the markets crashed.

## Workers don't need capitalists

The only thing honest about the Wall Street Journal's article was the use of the term "working class." At last they have to admit that the vast majority of people in this country are part of a class of workers and not just somewhere in the "middle."

Here's what Marxists deduce from the growth of income by the super-rich while government budgets are being slashed:

1. Under the capitalist system, the rich can never get enough. It's not just individual greed; it is how the system works. Those whose fortunes don't grow are thrust aside by more ruthless capitalists who will do anything to boost their profits — from bribing legislators to cut their taxes (known as lobbying), to laying off millions of workers when the system goes into crisis, to cutting wages and axing benefits, to scouring the earth for places where they can pay even less and rip off natural resources for a song.
2. Workers don't need capitalists. Wealth is not created by capitalists; it's created by workers. Paper wealth is just that — paper. Treasury notes, stocks and bonds, dividend coupons wouldn't be worth anything if workers weren't creating new goods and services every day.
3. Workers don't need capitalist bosses to "create jobs." In a socialist society, workers own the wealth and we decide what is needed: how much of our labor should be spent on creating new products; how much time should go into improving the infrastructure and the environment; how much time we can spend on relaxation, culture, sports and so on. Under socialism there is no reason for unemployment. Everyone can get work. Workers aren't pitted against each other in a labor "market" that promotes racism, sexism, lesbian-gay-bi-trans-queer oppression, ageism, disability prejudice and super-exploitation of immigrants.

And under socialism there is no place for a Wall Street or a Wall Street Journal that feeds us garbage and calls it news. □

## As Israel bombs Gaza

# U.S. rushes millions in military aid

By Deirdre Griswold

Israel has been rewarded by the U.S. imperialist government for its latest assault on the besieged Palestinian territory of Gaza, which began on April 7 at the same time as the federal budget showdown in Washington.

The short-term budget agreement crafted by Republicans and Democrats is cutting \$38 billion from services vitally needed by the working class of the U.S. But the Obama administration made sure that the budget included rushing \$205 million to Israel to build more anti-missile batteries called "Iron Dome." That's \$205 million above the \$3 billion that the U.S. will give Israel over the next year.

Iron Domes cost \$60 million each. Israel just deployed several against Gaza. While Israeli warplanes were carrying out intense air strikes on the heavily populated Palestinian territory and its tanks were lobbing shells on farmers there, the Iron Dome batteries were intercepting rockets fired from Gaza.

The result: 18 Palestinians were killed and 60 wounded in the five days beginning April 7.

No Israelis were killed; one was injured. As of April 11, a shaky cease-fire seems to be in place.

Have the big-business media shown any sympathy for the heroic Palestinians who face these enormous odds when they confront the U.S.-armed Israeli state?

Do they explain that Israel had so tightened its blockade around Gaza that only about a fourth of the food and fuel to satisfy its needs was being allowed in by the Israeli occupiers?

Do they report on the reaction and views of millions of people around the world who support the Palestinian people's struggle to return to the homeland that was taken away from them with the creation of Israel?

No, they focus on Israel's role as a long-time ally of Washington in the Middle East. They present this alliance as all to the good, even though stability in the area has meant the brutal rule of such hated U.S. allies as Egypt's Hosni Mubarak and the oil dynasties in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Kuwait. Of course, this reliance on

Israel as a military superpower in the region, built up by the Pentagon, has suited the huge U.S. oil companies very nicely.

## U.S.-armed Israel ignored first cease-fire

In this latest explosion of violence, the media talk all about the rockets that were fired from Gaza into southern Israel, even though Israeli bombs pounded Gaza City on March 22, killing 20 people, including children. The Palestinians, unlike Israel, have no jet fighters, no drones, no tanks. But they have enormous will to continue their struggle for self-determination. The rockets, which are not sophisticated and cannot be precisely aimed, are virtually their only weapon in the struggle to break the Israeli blockade that cuts them off from the world.

In the first 48 hours after a Palestinian rocket hit a school bus in Israel on April 7, wounding a teenager, the Israelis carried out 46 air strikes on Gaza, according to a spokesperson for the Israeli army. Gaza medical authorities say the strikes killed 10 people and wounded 45 others.

On the very first night, Hamas, the governing party elected by the people of Gaza, had accepted "a cease-fire with Israel after agreeing with other factions and militant groups to halt rockets on Israel." (Xinhua, April 9)

But Israel, claiming it was not officially informed of the cease-fire, instead launched more air strikes on densely populated Gaza City.

Having inflicted great pain and suffering on the people of Gaza, and having collected their reward from the U.S. government, Israel's rulers seem to have pulled back for now — although another outright invasion of Gaza, like the one two winters ago, is always a strong possibility.

But Israel's hawks, undoubtedly emboldened by the aggression launched by the U.S. and NATO on Libya, also know that in Egypt, along Gaza's other border, the ground is shaking under the feet of those who have collaborated with Tel Aviv and Washington.

The awakening of the masses in North Africa and the Middle East holds great promise for the Palestinian people and their aspiration to be free — "from the river to the sea." □

# A brief history of Wisconsin

*Continued from page 8*

based on the farmers, is now a party of big capital. The Democratic Party has some people based in the unions. However, the industrial unions have been greatly weakened.

The election in 2010 of Gov. Scott Walker, a Republican who has launched a direct attack on the very existence of unions, was the result of people's frustration with the failure of the Democrats to stem the growing capitalist economic crisis.

A union firefighter recently told me that he had voted for Walker because he thought at the time that Walker would bring jobs, while the Democratic candidate would not. But now he was out on the streets, protesting Walker's attack on the unions' right to bargain and organize.

Some think the uprising of the Wisconsin public workers has energized the Democratic Party. But U.S. Sen. Herb

Kohl, a Democrat, never went to Madison and has said nothing about this struggle. President Barack Obama likewise has not spoken to the protesters or the teachers, only to a group of mainly Republican governors, telling them he understands their budget problems.

What strength the unions have at present comes from the public sector, like the teachers. If Gov. Walker is able to destroy the government unions, he will basically have destroyed the Wisconsin union movement.

But this is the past. Today the people of Wisconsin — union members, students and people from the community — are in the streets and have actually succeeded in occupying the Capitol for more than three weeks. They have gone around the capitalist political parties in their struggle, imparting a new consciousness that will make a new history. □



## GAZA: Symbol of Resistance

A book of articles from WW, edited by Joyce Chediak

The compelling story of how Gazans withstood blockade and bombardment only to stand tall, refusing to give up the right to determine their own lives and to choose their own government; how Gaza's courage inspired a worldwide solidarity movement determined to break the blockade and deliver aid; exposes the forces behind the punishment of Gaza, and how a growing people's media is breaking the mainstream media's information blockade on this event.

Available from [Leftbooks.com](#)



## Africa under imperialist siege

# Attacks escalate on Libya, Ivory Coast, Zimbabwe

*Continued from page 1*

the foreign minister of Uganda and Mauritanian President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz.

In meetings with Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi, the government accepted the AU's peace proposal. It called for "the immediate cessation of all hostilities, the cooperation of the concerned Libyan authorities to facilitate the diligent delivery of humanitarian assistance to the needy populations, the protection of foreign nationals, including African migrant workers living in Libya, and dialogue between the Libyan parties and the establishment of an inclusive transition period." (AU Press Release, April 10)

The AU delegation then traveled on April 11 to Benghazi to meet with the Transitional National Council, which represents the opposition rebel forces. The TNC leadership rejected outright the AU's peace proposal and ruled out any solution short of regime change in Libya.

This is not the first time that peace proposals have been rejected by the rebels and their supporters in the U.S. and Western Europe. Latin American states led by Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez made overtures prior to the U.S./NATO bombings to work towards a ceasefire, but the efforts were rejected by the imperialists and the rebels.

On March 11, the AU Peace and Security Council issued a communiqué calling for a ceasefire. The statement also opposed foreign military intervention. This proposal was also dismissed by the Western states, which are now bombing Libya and the rebel forces.

The Obama administration has demanded that the Libyan government be toppled. Progressive forces within the U.S. peace movement and the oppressed communities here have condemned U.S. military attacks and the Pentagon's ongoing naval blockade of Libya. International opposition to the U.S./NATO bombing has increased daily. There have been demonstrations against the war in Egypt, Mali, Greece, Serbia, Canada and other countries.

On April 11, the Associated Press reported, "The military intervention in Libya cost the U.S. an extra \$608 million in the first few weeks of the operation. Officials call it extra costs because it doesn't

include complete spending such as paychecks for U.S. sailors, airmen and other forces, who would have been deployed somewhere in the world anyway."

### **Ivory Coast president seized by French military forces**

Another source of instability in Africa is the world's largest cocoa-producing West African state of Ivory Coast, where France, the former colonial power, in conjunction with the U.N., has toppled the incumbent president, Laurent Gbagbo. He was arrested and his rival, the Western-backed Alassane Ouattara, was installed. This conflict stemmed from a dispute over a runoff November election. The imperialist states backed Ouattara's candidacy.

Gbagbo insisted that he won the elections and that the Ivorian Supreme Court's decision upholding his position nullified the claims made by U.N. observers and the national electoral commission. On March 31, French and U.N. military forces accompanied by gendarmes (police) under Ouattara's control launched an offensive against military units that were loyal to Gbagbo.

France and the U.N. used heavy artillery, helicopters and airstrikes to attack the Gbagbo forces. During the siege on the presidential palace in the administrative capital of Abidjan, two massacres were carried out inside the country. Reports are that up to 1,000 people may have been killed in Duekoue. Although Ouattara's supporters have been accused of the massacre, the U.N. has attempted to also apportion some blame on the Gbagbo forces. Nonetheless, all of the victims were said to have been Gbagbo supporters.

On April 7, Rupert Colville, spokesperson for the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, said that 40 bodies were found in Bolequin. Independent journalists will undoubtedly investigate the culpability for these massacres in the weeks to come.

The French and U.N. involvement in the attempts to topple the Libyan government as well as the overthrow and arrest of Ivorian incumbent Gbagbo represents the increasingly aggressive military posture of Paris on the African continent. Although the French said Ouattara forces arrested Gbagbo, initial reports indicated that French Special Forces led the assault on his residence and seized him.

### **Israeli airstrike near Port Sudan**

The Sudanese government has blamed the Israeli Defense Forces for bombing a vehicle and killing two people on April 5. The Sudan Tribune reports, "A foreign plane launched the attack in an area known as Kalaneeb, which was described as 14 kilometers away from the coastal city of Port Sudan and on the main road leading to the regional airport." According to people nearby, "We heard three loud explosions. We went outside to see what was happening and eyewitnesses told us they saw two helicopters which looked like Apaches flying past." (April 5)

The Jerusalem Post says that Time magazine reported that a "senior IDF official confirmed that Israel was responsible for the deadly air strike on a car in Port Sudan." (April 7) A similar attack occurred in early 2009 when IDF fighter jets struck a convoy of vehicles in eastern Sudan, killing 119 people.

Israel has accused Sudan of transporting weapons from Iran to Gaza's Hamas government. Sudan has denied these allegations.

### **Zimbabwe launches anti-sanctions campaign**

In the Southern African nation of Zimbabwe, the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union-PF party and the government in Harare have embarked upon a petition campaign calling for the removal of Western economic sanctions against the country. The sanctions were leveled after a radical land redistribution program was adopted in 2000. The program took control of large tracts of territory that British settler-colonialists had seized during the late 19th century.

Although the government under President Robert Mugabe's leadership has established a coalition with the opposition Movement for Democratic Change factions, the U.S., Britain, Australia and the European Union have maintained economic sanctions against Zimbabwe. Zimbabwe's government is now preparing for national elections after drafting a new constitution.

The U.S. and other Western imperialist states are continuing to support the Western-oriented MDC-T faction headed by Morgan Tsvangirai. They plan to translate their support for the MDC-T into an electoral victory for the party,

which has refused to take an anti-sanctions position.

The state-controlled Zimbabwe Herald published an editorial on April 6 in which Mugabe's party, ZANU-PF said, "The Western hysterical expression about saving civilians in Libya must be dismissed with the contempt it deserves. The civilians of Libya do not matter as their oil does."

The editorial notes, "What Barack Obama has done in fact is to sign an assassination order for Muammar Gaddafi, and his desire may as well come to materialize as did that of his predecessor, George W. Bush, who pursued Saddam Hussein to the gallows. But Obama only sings humanitarian songs for civilians belonging to countries ruled by leaders that prevent the U.S. from imperially dominating their natural resources, such as the civilians in Libya, Zimbabwe, North Korea, Iran and Venezuela."

### **Role of U.S. anti-war movement**

The April 9 and 10 anti-war demonstrations in New York and San Francisco represent the strengthening of the movement for peace and social justice in the U.S. With the increasing attacks on labor, the poor and the oppressed by the bankers and their government backers, it will become increasingly important for people in this country to draw links between the worsening conditions of the workers and the relationship to the ever rising Pentagon budget.

In North Africa and the Middle East, the masses have engaged in mass demonstrations, strikes and rebellions against the ravages of world capitalism and its economic crisis. The struggles of workers in Wisconsin and other states in the U.S. have gained inspiration from the people of Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen and Bahrain.

This year's May Day will also take on added significance by providing an opportunity to raise to thousands of workers across the U.S. the links of the worldwide struggles against capitalism and imperialism. It will be the unity of program and action of the workers and oppressed across the globe that will end the exploitative systems and create the conditions for world peace and social justice for the majority of humanity.

*The writer was a speaker at the April 9 anti-war rally in New York City.*

## After Koran burning in U.S.

# Afghanistan erupts with anti-U.S./NATO protests

**By Gene Clancy**

Already bogged down in a bitter war of occupation, the U.S. has found itself facing renewed outrage by Afghans who are protesting both the U.S. and its NATO allies. Otherwise "pacified" cities have joined with guerrilla forces operating mainly in the countryside to demand that U.S. and NATO forces leave immediately.

Anger over the burning of the Muslim holy book by a Florida-based reactionary religious sect fueled the latest protests. The sect burning of the Quran took place on March 20 under the supervision of Terry Jones. Last September, after backing down from previous threats to burn the Quran, Jones had promised never to burn the Muslim holy book.

On April 1, thousands of demonstrators in the northern city of Mazar-i-Sharif poured into the streets after Friday prayers and overran a U.N. compound,

killing three U.N. staff members and four Nepalese guards. Security forces killed four demonstrators.

The next day hundreds of Afghans holding copies of the Quran over their heads marched in Kandahar before attacking cars and businesses. Security forces opened fire and nine protesters were killed. Kandahar's governor claimed that officers had only fired into the air. He said 81 were wounded and 17 people, including seven armed men, had been arrested.

In Jalalabad, the largest city in the east, hundreds of people blocked the main highway for three hours, shouting for U.S. troops to leave, burning an effigy of President Barack Obama and stomping on a drawing of a U.S. flag. More than 1,000 people set tires ablaze to block the highway in eastern Parwan province for about an hour, provincial police chief Sher Ahmad Maladani told the Associated Press. (April 3)

### **Resentment building for years**

Resentment has been building for years in Afghanistan over the operations of Western military forces, who are blamed for killing and mistreating civilians, and international contractors, who are seen by many as enriching themselves and fueling corruption at the expense of ordinary Afghans.

Coverage of the ongoing trial of a group of U.S. soldiers charged with killing Afghan civilians and publication of photos taken by some of those soldiers posing with dead bodies also fueled that anger.

Military commander and top NATO civilian representative in Afghanistan, Gen. Mark Sedwill, rather lamely said that they "hope the Afghan people understand that the actions of a small number of individuals, who have been extremely disrespectful to the Holy Qur'an, are not

representative of any of the countries of the international community who are in Afghanistan to help the Afghan people." (AP, April 3)

But the people of Afghanistan aren't buying this lie.

Not surprisingly, the Florida group burned the Quran just one week after Rep. Peter King's "Homeland Security" Congressional Committee launched a vicious attack on the U.S. Muslim community. King demanded an investigation into all mosques to see whether they were doing enough to find and expose "terrorists." King was appealing to racist reactionary constituents who have been trying to stop the building of a mosque in downtown Manhattan.

Afghans and Muslims around the world might very well ask, "Who is disrespecting whom?" □



# Alto a la guerra imperialista contra Libia

Por Fred Goldstein

El gobierno derechista e imperialista italiano encabezado por Silvio Berlusconi se ha unido a Francia, Qatar y Kuwait en el reconocimiento de los llamados “rebeldes” del Consejo Nacional de Transición Libio.

El reconocimiento llega luego de que el ejecutivo Paolo Scaroni, del gigantesco monopolio petrolero de Italia, Eni, se reuniera con los miembros del consejo para discutir la reactivación del acceso de la compañía a la producción de petróleo ahora en territorio “rebelde”.

El canciller italiano Franco Frattini, al referirse a Scaroni, dijo: “Él tuvo reuniones importantes para reiniciar la cooperación sobre energía.

“El apoyo de Roma es un estímulo para las fuerzas rebeldes porque Italia es el mayor socio comercial de Libia y el mayor comprador de petróleo y de gas natural de este país norteafricano”. (Wall Street Journal, 4 de abril)

Este paso del gobierno italiano sirve para destacar lo que está detrás de esta brutal e ilegal agresión que sin provocación alguna ha sido lanzada por el conjunto de potencias imperialistas occidentales y sus parásitos. Están utilizando una fuerza militar masiva en un intento por derrocar al gobierno soberano de un país de 6,5 millones de habitantes, subdesarrollado pero rico en petróleo.

## El objetivo es la reconquista colonial

Respaldadas por el imperialismo de EE.UU., las clases dirigentes de Italia, Francia y Bretaña, todas antiguas dueñas coloniales en Libia, están tratando de recolonizar el país. Quieren hacer en Libia lo que hicieron en Irak y lo que están ansiosas por hacer en Irán. Quieren recuperar el petróleo que fue nacionalizado gracias a las revoluciones de estos países. Quieren volver a establecer bases militares que fueron cerradas por las revoluciones e instalar regímenes clientes que subordinen las riquezas del país y la mano de obra a los intereses imperialistas corporativos. Todo lo demás es mentira y engaño.

Italia llevó a cabo la brutal ocupación y colonización de Libia desde 1911 hasta 1943, cuando fue derrocada por Bretaña, Francia y EE.UU. a finales de la Segunda Guerra Mundial. Cuando estos poderes crearon un Estado en Libia en 1951, lo hicieron para que Bretaña, Francia y EE.UU. mantuvieran allí sus respectivas bases militares y sus intereses corporativos.

Bretaña mantuvo sus bases y la dominación política en el este, colindando con su antigua colonia Egipto, donde Bengasi y los “rebeldes” están ahora.

Francia mantuvo su ejército y su dominio en el suroeste, cerca de sus colonias de Argelia y Túnez.

Y los militares de EE.UU. mantuvieron la Base Aérea Wheelus en las afueras de Trípoli para así dominar el Mediterráneo. Todos estos parásitos imperialistas prosperaron aún más una vez que se descubrió petróleo en Libia en 1955.

Pero el despojo terminó con la revolución de 1969 liderada por Muamar Gadafi. Las bases militares de EE.UU.,

Bretaña y Francia fueron cerradas y las compañías petroleras fueron nacionalizadas eventualmente. Y la riqueza petrolera del país se utilizó para elevar el nivel de vida del pueblo libio llegando a ser al más alto de África.

## Las grandes petroleras y el capital occidental quieren retomar todo

Aunque el gobierno de Gadafi hizo importantes concesiones a las corporaciones y compañías petroleras occidentales en el 2004, estas concesiones se hicieron a regañadientes y siempre a un precio.

Por ejemplo, tanto Occidental Petroleum como Petro-Canada tuvieron que pagar mil millones de dólares por los derechos de exploración del petróleo. Caterpillar, Coca-Cola, Boeing, Raytheon, Conoco Phillips y Halliburton tuvieron que hacer concesiones al gobierno de Libia porque de lo contrario los acuerdos no hubiesen prosperado. (New York Times, 28 de marzo)

Los fondos de inversión libre (hedge funds) y las empresas de inversión de capital privado (private equity firms) han intentado meter sus manos en los 70 mil millones de dólares de los fondos del estado soberano de Libia, producto de la riqueza petrolera del país.

Pero los antiguos poderes coloniales de Libia lo quieren todo de vuelta.

Ellos quieren eliminar toda resistencia del gobierno. Ellos quieren un régimen títere obediente, dependiente, y colaborador como el Consejo Nacional de Transición — el cual sólo puede llegar a Trípoli, si puede, bajo la lluvia de bombas y balas del imperialismo.

Nunca había sido montada una armada naval y aérea con tanto poder destructivo para arremeter contra un país tan pequeño para fomentar el progreso de un grupo tan insignificante y disfuncional como los llamados “rebeldes” de Libia.

Washington gastó \$550 millones en nueve días enviando misiles “Tomahawk”, desplegando siete barcos de guerra y docenas de bombarderos y aviones de combate en el Mediterráneo y dirigiendo completamente la guerra aérea. El Pentágono nunca llevó a cabo ni una sola misión “humanitaria” a menos que fuera una tapadera para la promoción de los intereses imperialistas de EE.UU.

Hasta ahora, este primer intento de choque y pavor desde el aire ha fracasado. Los “rebeldes” se asemejan a la banda que no podía apuntar la pistola. Cuando Barack Obama estaba siendo entrevistado en la NBC-TV por Brian Williams diciendo que la “soga se estaba apretando alrededor de Gadafi”, los rebeldes estaban

caóticamente huyendo de las fuerzas gubernamentales. Habían avanzado bajo el amparo de los misiles “Tomahawk”. Una vez que los misiles se detuvieron, los “rebeldes” fueron rápidamente dispersados.

Su “alto mando” se compone de un trío de rivales los cuales casi llegaron a los golpes entre sí después de la retirada de los “rebeldes” pro-imperialistas. El trío, entre ellos un general retirado, Khalifa Heftar, un exiliado traído del estado de Virginia en los EEUU, “se comportó como niños”, según un miembro del comité político del consejo. (New York Times, 4 de Abril)

Ahora Washington y la OTAN tienen que volver a calibrar sus esfuerzos. La palabra “estancamiento” está apareciendo cada vez más en la prensa capitalista. Los imperialistas occidentales han llevado a cabo una aventura buscando un “cambio de régimen” en nombre de la democracia, pero sus contradicciones se están acumulando.

Washington apoya la monarquía burguesa/feudal de Arabia Saudita, donde se cortan las manos como castigo de rutina, las mujeres son tratadas como propiedad, y donde rige la familia real. Apoya las monarquías reaccionarias petroleras en Bahréin, Kuwait y los Emiratos Árabes Unidos — todas siendo creaciones del imperialismo en primer lugar. La llamada “dictadura” no tiene nada que ver con el sangriento asalto al gobierno de Gadafi.

## Los verdaderos proveedores de masacres

Cada palabra pronunciada por el presidente Obama y todos los líderes de la OTAN sobre “la prevención de masacres” y la protección de civiles son absolutas falsedades habladas por los gobiernos que sólo han traído la mayor destrucción y muerte a innumerables civiles en la historia moderna.

Washington mató a un millón y medio de civiles iraquíes, incluyendo medio millón de niños/as, en 10 años de sanciones. Luego mató a otro millón en la segunda guerra de Irak, desplazó a 3 millones más y destruyó la infraestructura civil de la economía.

El Pentágono masacra civiles en Afganistán con regularidad, utilizando aviones teledirigidos Predator y otros helicópteros de combate. Paga por cada bala, cohete, tanque y helicóptero utilizado por el estado de los colonos israelíes para la destrucción de viviendas, huertos y edificios palestinos y para el uso del “castigo colectivo” contra civiles — sin hablar de las masacres llevadas a cabo durante la guerra en Gaza.

Washington apoya a los escuadrones de muerte en Colombia que asesinan a

líderes sindicalistas y campesinos/as al igual que asesinan en masa a los/as habitantes de pequeños pueblos. Su récord de responsabilidad por matanzas en El Salvador, Nicaragua y Guatemala es bien conocido.

¿Cómo puede ser posible que el poder que atacó con bombas atómicas las ciudades de Hiroshima y Nagasaki las dos densamente pobladas, bombardeó Tokio y decenas de otras ciudades en Japón, y también Dresde en Alemania, asfixiando y quemando a cientos de miles de personas, estar interesado en proteger a la población civil?

## OTAN: la pandilla de colonizadores

La OTAN representa los poderes que colonizaron, torturaron y esclavizaron África, el este y sureste asiático, India, Indonesia y Latinoamérica al igual que el Oriente Medio — los poderes que dividieron el mundo para obtener ganancias. Estos poderes todavía tienen sus bancos, sus compañías de petróleo, sus minas, sus compañías farmacéuticas, sus compañías de construcción y toda corporación imperialista de súper-explotación esparcida por el mundo para chupar la riqueza y los recursos de sus ex colonias.

Estos son los poderes que ahora están sobrevolando y disparando sobre una ex colonia y lanzando bombas de 2.000 libras, de 500 libras, lanzando misiles “Tomahawk” y usando helicópteros de guerra para golpear las fuerzas del gobierno, bajo el pretexto de misión humanitaria.

Han movilizado la opinión mundial al repetir grandes mentiras una y otra vez. Pero nadie debería creer ni por un momento que los ladrones y saqueadores más grandes del planeta gastarían tanto tesoro y se arriesgarían en tal aventura por alguna otra cosa que no fuera lo que han buscado desde el comienzo del colonialismo y el imperialismo — ¡el botín!

Para ilustrar este punto, Estados Unidos acaba de mandar a Ali Tarhouni a Bengasi para ser nombrado ministro de finanzas y petróleo del régimen “rebelde”. Tarhouni pasó 36 años en el exilio en EE.UU. y desde 1985 ha estado enseñando en la Facultad Foster de Negocios de la Universidad de Washington en Seattle donde se hizo catedrático de microeconomía.

Ahora Tarhouni está dirigiendo el proceso de establecer la exportación de petróleo desde el este de Libia hasta Qatar. Tarhouni también ha estado presente en varias conferencias “pos-Gadafi” en Washington y Londres durante años.

El peor resultado posible de esta intervención sería que volviera el imperialismo a dominar a Libia. Eso sería el resultado más reaccionario posible. Abriría al pueblo libio a una intensa explotación y a la dominación total por los monopolios más poderosos del mundo del tipo que sufrieron antes de la revolución de 1969. Daría a las corporaciones y a la OTAN una presencia en el sur del Mediterráneo y aumentaría la amenaza contra el norte de África.

Todo esfuerzo debe hacerse ahora por todas las fuerzas progresistas y revolucionarias para detener la intervención imperialista en Libia. □

## LIBERTAD PARA LOS CINCO CUBANOS



Gerardo Hernández Nordelo, Ramón Labañino Salazar, Rene González Sehwerert, Antonio Guerrero Rodríguez & Fernando González Llort.